BEGINNING AGAIN.

When sometimes our feet grow weary
On the rugged hills of life,
The path stretching long and dreary
With trial and labor rife,
We pause on the upward journey,
Glancing backward o'er valley and glen
And sigh with an infinite longing
To return and "begin again."

For behind is the dew of the morning
With all its freshness and light,
And before our doubts and shadows,
And the chill and gloom of the night;
And we think of the sunny places
We pass so carelessly then,
And we sigh, "O Father permit me
To return and begin again."

We think of the many dear ones,
Whose lives touched ours, at times,
Whose loving thoughts and smiles
Float back like vesper chimes;
And sadly remember burdens
We might have lightened then,—
Ah, gladly would we ease them
Could we "begin again!"

And yet, how vain the seeking!
Life's duties press all of us on,
And who would shrink from the burden,
Or sigh for the sunshine that's gone?
And it may be, not far on before us,
Wait fairer places than then;
Our path may lead by still waters,
Though we may not "begin again."

Yet upward and onward forever
Be our path on the hills of life!
But ere long a radient dawning
Will glorify trial and strife,
And our Father's hand will lead us
Tenderly upward then,—
In the joy and peace of the better world
He'll let us "begin again."

IN THE LIGHT-HOUSE.

A New Year's Story.

It was the last day in the old year, and yet it did not seem much like winter, though the maple trees were bare and the flowers all dead. The oaks were covered thickly with leaves. True, when the wind blew it rustled through brown, dry foliage very different to the living tints of months back; but when you looked at the soft, muddy roads, or the clear blue sky, you scarcely realized that it was just past Christmas.

John Hudson, keeper of the light-house at Fishing Point, was brushing his weather-beaten coat (once black; now almost "sage-green") and giving parting directions to John Hudson, Junior—called "Jack" by his familiars. "Now mind and don't set the house on fire while I am gone. I must fix that chimney when I get back, or we'll be burnt out yet; and don't take to fooling with the oil—there isn't very much of it left now. There's that cord of wood in the yard; I guess you had better fill the wood boxes, and pick up a bit. I expect the inspector will be round before long, and we want to have everything taut and trim when he comes. Get your dinner when you're ready; I may be back in time, and I may not, with all these errands to do in the village; but anyway, I shall be home this afternoon. Good-by, sonny," and he tramped briskly away through the trees.

"Stub! Stub! here, sir. You must stay home with me. Father don't want you. There's a rat, sure's I live! Sick it, Stub! S-s-s—sick it!"

"Now," said Jack, after an exciting chase, in which boy and dog had howled and barked a most powerful duet, "now Stub, we'll wash the breakfast dishes—won't we?"

Stub looked a knowing assent, and sat gravely on a chair (which he first knocked the cat off), while Jack washed and dried the few dishes as deftly as a girl. He had lived here as long as he could remember. His earliest recollection was looking at the bright reflector upstairs, and seeing in it a sweet, loving face, with tender blue eyes, near his own. His next memory of the face was in a coffin, pale and still, while his father held his hand, and the minister from the village talked in a low sad tone. But this was years ago, when Jack was (as he would inform you) "only a little fellow." Now, from his dignified age of ten years, he felt himself almost arrived at man's estate. His father was formerly a sailor, but in consequence of losing some of his fingers in the icy regions of the North, he had had to accept the position of light-house keeper—loving the sea too well to think of any work further inland. Such stories as he used to tell Jack in the winter days, when they would be cut off by snowdrifts from the rest of the world. Such thrilling adventures as delighted the boy's ears in the long, solitary evenings. Stories of the time on Labrador, when a tremendous whale capsized a boat's crew, and two men got drowned; of the mutiny that once broke out on the Fair Betsy, and the sneaking Italian who got put in irons for starting it.

Jack would go to bed with a "creepy" kind of feeling after these stories, but the morning light always drove away the shadows, and he would vow to himself never to let such ridiculous stories frighten him again. "Stub, let's play Robinson Crusoe in the yard, now the dishes are all washed; Jane (to the cat), you can come, too, if you want," said Jack, opening the door. Stub accepted the invitation for himself and Jane by making a dart at her as she lay blinking near the stove, and rushing her out of doors with scant ceremony.

"This shed here shall be the cave, and I'll wear father's fur cap and be Robinson Crusoe. You can be Friday, Stub. You are black, and you don't know much; and Jane shall sit up here on the woodpile and be the parrot. Now, Friday, you just stay there while I go to get some sticks for the wood-box;" and Jack, making his work into play, worked with a will, while the waves romped and tossed about on the shore like merry children, and a little gray cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, rose slowly in the north and made another dash of color in the brilliant sky.

"Why, I declare, if it ain't going to snow! I wish father would hurry up. How quickly the clouds have come! and they look heavy, too, as if they were just bursting with the piles of snow-flakes hid away in them. My! won't it be jolly coasting, though! It hasn't been half a winter yet—no snow, except a little that melted right away, and none of the ponds frozen over. I guess I had better see if my sled's all right;" and away Jack ran on this hollow pretense—this delightful piece of self-delusion about the condition of the "Artful Dodger;" for had he not examined it daily for the past two months, and longed impatiently for a chance to use it? "My! there's a snow-flake, as sure's the world; and there's another, and another—swarms of 'em!" exclaimed happy Jack to his small but select audience of Stub and Jane. They were very amiable, and frisked and gamboled with as good an appearance of happy innocence as he desired.

"It's getting dark very quickly; not four o'clock yet. I guess it's going to be a pretty big fall this time, and—whew! Stub, hear the wind; sounds squally, don't it?"

Stub looked with an air of gravity through the window, and seemed to be of the opinion that it certainly did appear threatening.

"What keeps father so late, I wonder? If it keeps on getting dark as fast as this the light will have to be fixed pretty soon."

Thick and fast fell the snow-flakes hurrying, scurrying down, as if in haste to see which could first reach the earth. Every now and then a violent gust of wind would come that romped and rioted among the dry leaves that still clung to some of the trees, and near at hand the waves surged, and dashed, and tossed themselves on the shore and against the rocks.

"I know the lamp ought to be lit. I'd better go right away and do it," said Jack, addressing his companions. As they raised no objection, Jack started, materials in hand, and they followed—to see, no doubt, that everything was done fairly and squarely. Up the stairs went the trio, Stub ahead, snuffling and peering into all the dark corners; Jack, with the lamp and oil in his hand, following warily, and Jane, with a dignity suitable for a lady of her years, bringing up the rear. Jack knew how to set to work. He watched his father daily, and had sometimes been allowed to help him; so in a very short time a friendly glow of light poured through the windows of the little tower, and laid bare the deep, treacherous rocks with blunt distinctness, while they strove vainly to hide beneath the stormy waves.

"I suppose we might as well get supper ready now, against father comes," and Jack laid the cloth neatly, and cut the bread with a will. Like a few rare and isolated boys of his age, being hungry was Jack's normal condition, relieved at occasional intervals by being satisfied. Supper was waiting—father's tea was bubbling on the stove (Jack's limited knowledge of cooking had not taught him that tea should never be allowed to boil). Jack's basin of broken bread in readiness for the scalding milk, some dried beef as special treat, and plenty of good bread, cheese and butter besides. Inside all was warm and cozy, cheery and home-like; outside, stormy and blustering.

Two hours passed, and still no father. Jack had made a tremendous effort to delay eating till he arrived; but bit by bit the broken bread had disappeared, followed by other selections from the bill of fare, while Jane lapped a saucer of milk, and the quondam Friday, forgetting his cannibilistic tendencies, made a hearty repast on dried beef and pieces of Jack's bread and butter.

"Seven o'clock, and father not home yet! Well, the light will burn an hour yet without fixing. Father says it would burn longer than that, but it's safest to look at it every four hours, and he's sure to be here before it wants looking to." So Jack got his favorite book from the shelf, and settled down for a cozy read in his father's arm-chair near the stove. It certainly was very exciting—where Crusoe and Friday discover the arrival of the one-and-twenty savages, and disturb them at their revolting repast. But Jack got up so early mornings, and was so active all day, that no wonder his ideas began to stray and his eyes to blink and close. Stub had settled himself near for a little quiet meditation—nose between two black, outstretched forepaws and gaze fixed on nothing in particular; while Jane, having first made her toilet for the night by careful washing and patting, dozed peacefully behind the stove. Tired Jack slept, and dreamed he was Crusoe, and had just built a beautiful sled, and he and Friday coasted down among the Cannibals and sent flying on all sides; and the old clock ticked, ticked, while out doors the snow blew in whirls, and a weary man fought hard against the wind, and sought to find again the beaten path to his home. Hour after hour passed, till the faithful hammer, striking ten, woke Jack in bewilderment at not finding himself in his own little bed. "What's the matter?" he said, shaking himself and standing up. "Why, how late it is! What can have happened to father?"

Stub roused up, but could not answer the question, so wisely kept silence—people don't always, you know.

"The light! the light! Oh! suppose it's gone out! I must go up this very minute to see, though it's awfully dark, and the stove's gone out, too; but I can't stop to make it up now. Come, Stub, you can go with me if you want to," said diplomatic Jack, who really didn't like to go through all those dark passages and stairways alone, but who wouldn't have had Stub know it for the world.

The house had got all cold, and Jack was hunting long about with shivering fingers before he could find the proper oil for the light. At last, however, he found it, spilled a lot of it in pouring it out into the small can, and got the rest safely up the first flights of stairs, Stub following rather sleepily. The light tower was built high above the dwelling part of the house, and was reached by several steep flights of stairs, and finally by a ladder to a trap-door. The roof and walls from about four feet from the floor were glass, and the light, lamp and reflector stood on a kind of stand, and about five feet high. All the beautiful brass plates were kept as brilliant as a mirror, and the windows were transparent and speckless as pure water. It was John Hudson's duty to keep them in this condition. Inspectors, were always dropping in at unexpected times, and dismissal from the post would have followed any lack of proper attention to these details. But it was the lighthouse-keeper's pride to keep them bright and burnished even beyond any laws and regulations.

Jack reached the foot of the ladder, and was slowly mounting, when his foot slipped and he fell. Stub looked at him helplessly, and waited for him to pick himself up. Jack had kept hold of his lantern, and fortunately it had not got extinguished; the oil can fell at a little distance.

"What's the matter now? What ails my foot?" said he, making several ineffectual attempts to stand, "My! how it hurts!" and he held it in his hand while he bravely kept the tears back. "I guess I've sprained it, or something. What shall I do? I could manage to slide down stairs again and wait there till father comes. But then the light; that ought to be attended to. Oh! why ain't father back!" and he winced with pain as a sudden twinge came from his ankle.

"Oh, dear, it's tough work," said he, as with the oil can slung across one arm he tried to climb the ladder with one foot and one knee.

"I guess I'd better give it—pshaw! What's a fellow good for, anyway, if he can't put himself out of the way for other folks once in a while. How the tower shakes! What a night it is!"

The ascent was made at last, and the light reached. "Just in time," said Jack; "the oil's all but finished. I guess I didn't put as much in as father did," and he hopped around the narrow space and trimmed the lamp. It took him some time, and the boy's fingers were getting stiff with cold, while his ankle kept bringing a look of pain across his face.

"I shall freeze before I get it done," groaned Jack, putting his finger ends into his mouth to warm them. "My foot! my foot!" he shrieked, as forgetting it for an instant, he had stepped on it. Stub, in the room below, gave a howl of sympathy, and dashed frantically at the foot of the ladder to reach his camrade.

"I can't stand it any longer! Oh, father! father!" and Jack fell unconscious on the floor.

All was silent once again in the house; no voice save the old clock ticking the seconds away—the last minutes of the old year.

Loud blew the wind in the face of a footsore man, bruised by an outstretched branch, unseen—in the darkness, and striving, with unsteady steps, to reach his home. Out at sea, a noble vessel was battling with the storm, and happy hearts, unconscious of danger, were thinking of the glad meetings of the dear faces that should welcome their return in the bright new year. Anxious hearts were beating in secret, as the pilot and the captain paced the deck uneasily, and peered through the storm, and—

"Questioned of the darkness, which was sea,
and which was land."

"Fishing Point light ought to show to the nor'ard," said the captain.

"I've been looking for it," returned the pilot, "but the snow is so blinding I've not been able to see it yet. There it is!" he exclaimed, after some minutes more of weary watching, and the snow cloud seemed parted by a warm gleam of light. And miles away, in storm-rocked tower, lay a prostrate form, cold and motionless, while the joy bells of the glad new year were ringing in the hopes and triumphs of a thousand hearts.

Bravely the good ship Dauntless sailed into port on that morning, with colors flying and friendly cheers from the shore.

"A pretty narrow escape we had last night—so the pilot tells me," said a passenger to his friend, after a hearty greeting. "All but lost off fishing Point. The light shone on the rocks just in time, or we should not have been here now."

But Jack never knew anything of this. All he knew was that his father said, patting his head: "God bless you, sonny. If it hadn't been for the light shining through the darkness of that awful night, I shouldn't have been alive to take care of you now." And Jack thought this quite make up for the long, weary weeks of pain before he could use his lame foot again.

It is calculated that the cotton-worm costs the planters $15,000,000 annually.

There is a town in Connecticut that has no fear of the measles. It's Haddam.
—*Boston Saturday Gazette.*